

# Long live the LANCER

## Airpark dedication ceremony celebrates the history behind Tinker and the B-1B

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After months of hard work by dozens of volunteers, the restoration of the B-1B Lancer on static display in the Maj. Charles B. Hall Memorial Airpark was completed in June. The aircraft was officially dedicated in a ceremony July 27.

“The B-1 aircraft is one of our most lethal combat weapons and an example of America’s military might,” said then-Maj. Gen. Terry L. Gabreski, Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center commander. “We’ve had a long history with this aircraft here at Tinker.”

Gen. Gabreski said it began when Tinker became the system manager for the B-1 in 1968.

“Our predecessors at Tinker worked really hard as we brought these first aircraft into the inventory, and they worked diligently until the program was discontinued in 1977,” she said. “We regained full responsibility for the weapons system again in 1982, and our engagement in a very personal way has continued to this day.”

Gen. Gabreski said a great example of how personal Tinker’s relationship with the B-1 aircraft occurred in 2003 when a group of Tinker civilians deployed to Dyess Air Force Base, Texas, to perform critical repairs on the aircraft to keep the entire B-1B fleet flying.

“It is the same Tinker warrior spirit that drove this project to get this aircraft in the airpark to a successful completion,” she said. “That includes getting the aircraft from the flight line over to the airpark despite rainstorms and getting stuck in the mud.”

A group of 177 individuals from across the base participated in the restoration of the aircraft and the airpark for more than a year.

“The airpark is an opportunity to show the community some of the history of Tinker AFB, and also some of the aircraft we currently work on and fly,” said 2nd Lt. Kevin McClure, 327th Contractor Logistics Support Group and an airpark volunteer. “I think it is a great way for people to come and see up close what is normally flying over them.”

Lt. McClure, whose main duties at the airpark



Maj. Gen. Terry Gabreski, Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center commander, speaks to the crowd gathered July 27 to welcome the B-1 to its permanent home in Tinker’s Maj. Charles B. Hall Memorial Airpark.

included coordinating schedules and providing updates on the progress of the project, also took the time to “get down and dirty,” helping to prepare the B-1B for painting.

“The best thing was working with some outstanding individuals that were motivated to get the project finished — even during the worst weather conditions,” he said. “It is also a great feeling knowing that I have worked on something that I can show to friends and family for years.”

The B-1B Lancer is the ninth aircraft to be dedicated in the airpark joining the A-7D Corsair II, the F-105D Thunderchief, the B-47 Stratojet, the C-47 Skytrain, the C-135 Stratolifter, the F-4D Phantom II, the B-29 Superfortress and the B-52 Stratofortress.

The Tinker Air Force Base Heritage Airpark was first established in April 1984 when the first

aircraft, a B-52D Stratofortress, was dedicated. Tinker and community leaders officially dedicated the opening of the airpark to the public and the eight static aircraft on display in January 2000.

On June 18, 2002, the Heritage Airpark was renamed the Maj. Charles B. Hall Memorial Airpark, in honor of Maj. Hall, a Tuskegee Airman and highly decorated pilot from the 99th Pursuit Squadron, which was part of the 332nd Fighter Group.

During World War II, Maj. Hall was the first African-American pilot to down an enemy aircraft in combat. He flew 198 combat missions over Africa, Italy and other parts of Europe. He was the first African-American to receive the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Maj. Hall worked at Tinker Air Force Base from 1949 to 1967.



Air Force photos by Margo Wright

Beside the newly refurbished B-1 Lancer at Tinker’s Maj. Charles B. Hall Memorial Airpark, base leaders unveil the dedication plaque during a July 27 ceremony. From left are; Col. James Hall, 327th Lancer Sustainment Squadron commander; then-Maj. Gen. Terry L. Gabreski, Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center commander; Col. Joan M. Cunningham, 72nd Air Base Wing commander; and Lt. Col. Jennifer Cushion, 654th Combat Logistics Support Squadron commander.



Photo courtesy of Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center History Office

The first B-1B to receive modifications at Tinker arrived in March 1988 from McConnell Air Force Base, Kan. The aircraft’s first modification project was aimed at reducing the vulnerability of the aircraft to bird strikes.



Photo courtesy of Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center History Office

The Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center has been the provisional source of repair for the B-1 since 1981.

## B-1B Lancer Fact File

### Mission

Carrying the largest payload of both guided and unguided weapons in the Air Force inventory, the multi-mission B-1 is the backbone of America’s long-range bomber force. It can rapidly deliver massive quantities of precision and non-precision weapons against any adversary, anywhere in the world, at any time.

### Background

The B-1A was initially developed in the 1970s as a replacement for the B-52. Four prototypes of this long-range, high speed (Mach 2.2) strategic bomber were developed and tested in the mid-1970s, but the program was canceled in 1977 before going into production. Flight testing continued through 1981.

The B-1B is an improved variant initiated by the Reagan administration in 1981. Major changes included the addition of a structure to increase payload by 74,000 pounds, an improved radar and reduction of the radar cross section by an order of magnitude. The inlet was extensively modified as part of this RCS reduction, necessitating a reduction in maximum speed to Mach 1.2.

The first production B-1 flew in October 1984, and the first B-1B was delivered to Dyess Air Force Base, Texas, in June 1985. Initial operational capability was achieved on Oct. 1, 1986. The final B-1B was delivered May 2, 1988.

The B-1B holds almost 50 world records for speed, payload, range, and time of climb in its class. The National Aeronautic Association recognized the B-1B for completing one of the 10 most memorable record flights for 1994. The most recent records were made official in 2004.

The B-1B was first used in combat in support of operations against Iraq during Operation Desert Fox in December 1998. In 1999, six B-1s were used in Operation Allied Force, delivering more than 20 percent of the total ordnance while flying less than 2 percent of the combat sorties. Eight B-1s were deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

B-1s dropped nearly 40 percent of the total tonnage during the first six months of OEF. This included nearly 3,900 JDAMs, or 67 percent of the total. All of this was accomplished while maintaining an impressive 79 percent mission capable rate.

### General characteristics

**Span:** 137 feet forward, 79 feet swept aft  
**Length:** 137 feet  
**Height:** 34 feet  
**Weight:** 190,000 pounds empty; 477,000 pounds max  
**Engine:** Four GE F101-102 turbofan; 30,780 pounds thrust each  
**Maximum speed:** 900-plus mph  
**Ceiling:** Over 30,000 feet  
**Cost:** \$200-plus million  
**Crew:** Four

## Tinker’s B-1 History Highlights

June 12, 1972 — The Oklahoma City Air Materiel Area receives the assignment for the B-1 inter-continental strategic bomber.

June 30, 1977 — President Jimmy Carter announces discontinuation of the B-1 production program. Thus, the Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center loses system management responsibility on the B-1 airframe and item management responsibility on the aircraft’s F101 engines.

August 18, 1972 — The F101 engine, used on the B-1 Bomber, is assigned to OCAMA.



January 6, 1981 — Headquarters Air Force Logistics Command names OC-ALC the provisional system manager for the B-1B Bomber.

July 28, 1981 — HQ AFLC names OC-ALC the provisional source of repair for the B-1B Bomber.



March 14, 1988 — Tinker’s first B-1B (aircraft No. 86-0125 named “Shack Attack”) arrives from McConnell Air Force Base, Kan., for modification. The first OC-ALC modification project on the aircraft is the Bird strike Vulnerability Reduction Modification, a sophisticated maintenance modification aimed at reducing the vulnerability of the aircraft to bird strikes. The effort was in response to the loss of a B-1B (aircraft No. 84-0052) in Septemeber 1987 caused by a collision with a 15-pound bird during low-level flight.

March 23, 1988 — The official ribbon-cutting ceremony for the first B-1B to arrive for modification at Tinker was held.

October 1, 1988 — OC-ALC begins programmed depot maintenance on the B-1B